

**Desember**

**2023**

# 61 Mech Monthly

61 Mech Veterans Association

# 61 Meg Maandeliks

61 Meg Veterane Vereniging



***Desember 2023 op die  
61 Meg Veterane front***

***The 61 Mech Bn Gp  
Diaspora  
Witwatersrand Rifles***

**Mag die grootste geskenke wat jy  
die Feesseisoen ontvang, die wees van  
Liefde, Vreugde, Vrede, Gesondheid en Geluk**

*Geseënde Kersfees*



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*Alle 61 Meg lede word hartlik uitgenooi om toepaslike artikels in te stuur vir publikasie in hierdie maandblad.*

*Kom ons hou saam hierdie publikasie lewendig.*

*All 61 Mech members are cordially invited to submit relevant articles for publication in this monthly magazine.*

*Let's together keep this publication alive.*

*lotterdh@gmail.com*



# **2023 - AN OVERVIEW**

## **EXCO**



The year 2023 had many highlights for the members and families of the 61 Mech Veterans Association but there were also some lows. In a post-Covid era we all felt the tight grip of the economy in our daily lives and in our businesses, but true to our motto *Mobilitate Vincere* we know that through mobility we will always win!

On the 17th April 2023 our 7th Commanding Officer, Col (Ret) Gerhard Louw, HC, MMM sadly passed away. Col Louw was the commanding Officer of the 61 Mechanised Battalion Group from 1991 to 1993. He played a huge role in many of our lives and had an illustrious Military career. We honour his memory!

The 61 Mech VA has set as a goal to get all of our families involved in our official programs. 61 Mechanised Battalion Group existed for just 27 years, but in that short lifetime it participated in no less than 37 large-scale actions and operations, earning a well-deserved name as one of the finest fighting units in South Africa's military annals. A history of which we are all very proud of!

The 61 Mech veterans who served during all these different periods are now united again as members of the 61 Mech Veterans Association where they treasure the history of this unit and commemorate the memory of their fallen brothers with dignity. 105 soldiers lost their lives serving 61 Mech. With the untimely deaths of these soldiers, they were never awarded the coveted 61 Mech 'Yellow Messie'.

At the beginning of 2023 the 61 Mech VA reached out to all our living Commanding Officers and asked their permission and blessing to contact the families of our fallen brothers and to present to them their loved ones 'Yellow Messie' posthumous. By doing this we as fellow brothers and veterans acknowledge the role that these brothers of ours has played in the history of 61 Mech.

We have started this process in all earnest and have already posthumously awarded 16 families with their loved ones 'Yellow Messie'. This was done at the Smokeshell Memorial in Bloemfontein on 16 June 2023, at the Annual Memorial Service at Ditsong Museum for Military History on the 19th August and also the Memorial Service held in the Western Cape on the same date. These soldiers will never be forgotten!

We are now in yet another new year with its unique challenges. On behalf of the Patron, the Directors, and the members of the 61 Mech VA Executive Committee, we would like to thank every individual who spent many hours growing our Organisation. We know that behind the scenes they all have families and friends that support them in this great cause. We would also like to thank them!

We wish that each of our members, their families, and the friends of our Organisation have a positive life journey in 2024 and our prayers are that this year will be filled with success, happiness, and prosperity!

***Strength, Honour and Faith. You did it!***

Acknowledgement with respect in saluting you guys. Strength, honour and Faith. You did it! Special credit, honour and recognition are due to our national servicemen who served South Africa in the bundu far away from home.

They did sterling fighting work and professional soldiering in challenging and ferociously harsh operational environments – these elements presented not only physical and psychological hardships, but also major challenges relating to overly adverse weather and difficult terrain conditions by night and day.

Many of the national servicemen I talked to in those days and later in their lives found their

work at 61 Mech rewarding, challenging, and exciting. They were extremely proud of their 61 Mech.

My good friend Epp van Lill who commanded 61 Mech in 1983 once said: “If you were with 61 Mech you were there”. I was there in 1981-82 and once again in 1987-88 with 61 Mech and our young South African warrior sons. What a great privilege, honour and a joy God had afforded me!

I wish I could name all the good people who were taken up in the structures of 61 Mech over the many years. Much more than a hierarchical organisation they were a natural balance of ordinary people armed with rifles, thoughts, and joy; a kinship who at times could become sullen because of lost ones and who could cry. In my heart and mind until to-day all these people counted. Lest we forget!





# KOLLEKTIEWE INTEGRITEIT

## *Gedagtes van 'n 61 Meg Veteraan*

Integriteit is die praktyk om eerlik te wees en 'n konsekwente en kompromislose nakoming van sterk morele en etiese beginsels en waardes te toon. In etiek word integriteit beskou as die eerlikheid en opregtheid of erns van 'n mens en 'n organisasie se voorneme en optrede.

61 Meg Bn Gp het dit verwerf en volgehou en uitgebou deur sy 27 jaar van aktiewe bestaan tot 2005. Na die ontbinding van 61 Meg in 2005 het dit tot 2008 geneem om die leemte – \*\*\* 'n Tuiste vir 61 Meg Veterane\*\*\* te skep. Tydens die stigting van die 61 Meg Veterane Vereeniging in 2008 het die stigterslede plegtig hierdie beginsels laat herlewe en onderneem om dit te onderhou. Die 61 Etos het herleef. Daaruit het gevloei die nasporing van 61 items wat wyd versprei was. Top prestasies was die publikasie van die eenheids geskiedenis met Mobility Conquers. Dit was eiesoortig maar duur (En uniek sover dit SA Militêre geskiedenis aanbetref). Na vele onderhandelings en oorwegings is die 61 Meg uitstalspasie by die Ditsong Museum gevestig. (En die daaropvolgende Jaarlikse Gedenkdienste seremonies).

Op 30 April 2010 is die 61 MVA amptelik aangestel as die Beskermheer van die 61 Meg nagedagtenis en memorabilia deur die voormalige Hoof van die Leër, Lt Genl SZ Choke. Die finale stap was in Mei 2021 toe die bestuur van die “Geel Messie” met ondersteuning van Deputy Chief of the Army Maj Gen M J de Goede, oorgedra is aan 61 MVV.

Sedert 2008 tot op hede het ons deur ontstuimige tot kalmer waters gevaar. Die 61 MVV het deurentyd 'n waardige en deursigtige beleid gehandhaaf van “The Regiment.... The Regiment” en het 61 Meg makkers ondersteun, finansiële en moreel. Dit het opofferings gekos wat nie altyd op die oppervlak sigbaar was nie. Oor 6 Jaar is dit ONS Jubileum (50 jr) bestaansvierings. Net 'n klein groepie in die geledere van die ou SAW sal hierop kan aanspraak maak.

Tot dan is daar unieke uitdagings om te oorkom. Dit sal nie moelik wees as elkeen onthou dat 61 Meg nie aan 'n individu behoort nie, maar aan die kollektiewe groep wat aktief aan 61 behoort het.

Niks behoort aan iemand nie. Want sodra “Iemand” eienaarskap wil afdwing, hetsy deur 'n motorfiets, bergfiets, club, streek of wat ookal die intensie is - As dit nie vir die gesamentlike voordeel van 61 Meg is nie, is dit buite die etos van die 61 Broederskap.

DIT GAAN OOR 61 MEG!! Nie oor die individu se eie belang nie. Enigiets wat onder 61 Meg se naam geskied, of 'n verbintenis het met 61 Meg (OP of Omtrent – Te of Naby) is gesamentlike eiendom onderworpe aan gesamentlike belang. En dit word bestuur deur die 61 Meg Veterane Vereeniging. (MVV/MVA). Niks wat verkry was/is weens assosiasie - met die eenheid as die vetrekpunt - behoort aan die individu nie.

Dit behoort aan ONS - 61 Meg Veterane. 'n Inisiatief ontstaan by die individu. Sodra 61 MVA direk of indirek daarby betrokke raak, gaan die eiendomsreg outomaties oor na die patriarg – 61 MVV. Dit is hulle ereplig om dit te beskerm as gesamentlike besit van alle lede van 61 Meg asook hulle ondersteuners en vriende. Die houer van iets het dieselfde mag daaroor as die persoon wat dit in die eerste plek aan hom oorgedra het nie. Alle 61 Meg verbandhoudende items, of dit nou tasbaar is of nie; of dit letterlik of figuurlik is, is en bly die eiendom van die 61 Meg veterane. En hierdie reg of gedeelte daarvan kan nie oorgedra word aan 'n suborganisasie nie.

Die individu (by naam) gaan verdwyn soos die jare aangaan. Wat gaan oorbly is die:

“The Regiment.... The Regiment”

# DECEMBER ON THE 61 MECH VETERANS FRONT

## DESEMBER OP DIE 61 MEG VETERANE FRONT

Henk Delport

*1 Desember*

Askari makkers Bravo 1983/84 se hallo by 1 SAI Bn vandag.

Vlnr.  
Kpl Spannenberg.  
Sktr. Munro.  
Sktr. Fisher.



**2 Desember Eugene Liebenberg**

Wolf Spirit Qumi homes Kers funksie. What a wonderful morning this was. It was very very special. Well done to the bikers for doing this for the disabled. I will support next year again. Smart man smart.

If you do not have the love, you have nothing. The special residents of this home show nothing but love. Hulle het presente gekry en hulle het so bietjie gedans ook! Later is die wat wou gevat vir n spin op die motorfietse.



Ek het vandag gaan support by die funksie. Dit was lekker om die 61 kleure te gaan wys. Die mensies, kinders en oumensw in te huise geniet die bikers baie baie. Eugene Liebenberg





## 8 December

**Andrew Whitaker**

Club Omuthiya held its year end function on Friday 8 December. There was a really good turnout of about 60. Reg Walkley started proceedings by welcoming all present and wishing all of peaceful festive season. Also announced that they had sponsored homemade bread, bread rolls, salads and Malva pudding and custard as well as some chips and small packets of peanuts and raisins. So the guests had only needed to bring their own meat. Then Barries read out the December birthdays. December appears to have been a very busy month for the mothers of the members and the list was long.

Followed by the normal braai. It was very festive and carried on much later than the normal monthly get togethers. We left at about 22.30 and many were still going strong.



A few travellers, Marlene and myself from East London, Spir Venter and his wife from Wepener and a retired colonel from Clarens. On a more personal note a good turnout of 7 Smokeshell veterans and their partners. Lukas Muller who also travelled from somewhere near Bultfontein had retired on the day as well.

## 9 December

**Andrew Whitaker**

HP and Phia were unable to make it as HPs orkes was performing at a function at the local SPCA. To include them in the weekend festivities, the Smokeshell guys arranged to meet for breakfast the next day at Traumerei and we had a good turnout of 6 veterans and 4 wives.



**Ras Joubert, Joggie Rautenbach, Angela Rautenbach, Bettie Jennings (obscured) Gordon Jennings, Marlene Whitaker, Phia Ferreira, HP Ferreira, Mourie van der Bijl.**



# Gauteng 9 December



## 61MVA GAUTENG END OF YEAR

### SKOUERSKUUR BRAAI:

Open to all 61MVA Members and friends

When: Saturday 9th Dec

Time 12h00, fire ready by about 13h00

Place: Moth Cottesloe Homes Hall, Fairlands.

Info: Bring and Braai, fire will be provided. The Born of 61 Youth will be doing a drive to collect back to school stationary for underprivileged kids, please support them by bringing some stationary along.

Info and receive pin by messaging Robert on 073 671 6826.

General Roland De Vries words as quoted by Rob Torrani

This unit to this day still is a proud unit with all its veterans and preserves our proud history for generations to come.

“Salute guys .... something about your unit .... 61 Mech was one of the finest combat forces in the military history of South Africa and it played a decisive role during the South African Border War from 1979 until 1988. As

such it is interesting to note that this unit extraordinary was commended by the Cubans for its suburb fighting work done in southern Angola under the direst of operational circumstances, a tribute due to the unit's widely recognised military professionalism and highly regarded operational standing.

61 Mech existed only for 27 years but in its short life-time participated in more than 37 large-scale operations. It started as a composite Battle Group Juliet in 1979, but was soon renamed 61 Mechanised Battalion Group to take its place on the regular order of battle as the SADF's first-ever multi-arms fighting unit. The enemies, allies, and terrain and weather conditions the SADF, SWATF and 61 Mech had to contend with within the northern operational area were challenging. The operational zone was generally referred to in former SADF terms as the Western Sub-Theatre of War.



# ***Port Elizabeth 9 December***



***Leon Havenga***

9 December

61 Get together at the cave - Port Elizabeth  
— with John Damian Barnard and Adolf Arndt.

## ***16 December***



***Leon Havenga***

61 Get-together at the Cave, Port Elizabeth



# 16 December KZN

**Andrew Whitaker**

Awesome get together with the Natal lads. Frank Lello KIA at Smokeshell on 10 June 1980. His 61 triangle was presented to his Niece, Twonita Bradford as well as Triangles presented to families of 3 veterans that passed away during the year, Hilton Ratcliffe, Johan Coetzee and Hilton Naish as well as a long overdue medal - Southern African medal presentation to Ken Livingston.



**Andrew Whitaker**

Twonita Bradford, was one of the only female intake at Lohatla. Inspired to serve, by the death during operation Sceptic, of her uncle Frank Lello. She became a Captain in the Intelligence unit and left to marry, Peter, a helicopter flight engineer, when she realised that promotion prospects seemed limited after serving for 16 years.

She withdrew from our Smokeshell get together in Bloemfontein in June this year and I received Frank's 61 triangles from Gen Dippenaar on her behalf. It was sent to Durban to be presented to her. When we decided to visit my sister and brother in law for a few days, I contacted Anton Muller, the 61 coordinator in Natal and asked if

it would be possible to arrange to present it to her. It was arranged for 16 December in what turned out to be a magnificent day.

A turnout of about 50, saw a small parade, with Anton as presiding officer and member of parliament and retired RSM acting as SM of the parade. The 61 triangle was then presented to Twonita and 3 others were presented to the families of Hilton Ratcliffe, Johann Coetzee and Hilton Naish. All 3 61 veterans from KZN that passed away during the year. Unfortunately Peet Haarhof had to withdraw at last minute and was not present to receive his geel messie. Then one of the 61 veterans was awarded his pro patria, albeit some 30 years late.

This was followed by a wonderful braai. On a more personal note it was wonderful



meeting Twonita and Peter and managing to find quality time to just chat. Smokeshell veterans present were myself, Mike Bond, Colin Green and Peter Williams and I think she really enjoyed meeting and chatting to all. It was rounded off with her having a good chat with Doc Antony Turton and him reciting some of the poetry that he had written. He also has an amazing way of bringing comfort. I think also appropriate to thank Anton for all the effort he put in and the Better Ole Shell-hole for hosting us.





## ***17 December***



61 Riders FMC on the move

## ***22 December***

Andrew Whitaker  
Met 61 veteran, Brian Heathfield this afternoon. Last saw each other 1980. Delivered his geel messie and had a great catchup at his house in Mtunzini





**Brian Heathfield**

Thank you Andrew and Marlene for the visit. My geel messie has pride of place on my surf board with my surname carved in the Gaelic dialect.

**Johan Swart**

Het 'n draai by LeBrun se plekkie The Jolly Roster...gemaak en lekker gesels..Hy was Ops Protea...lekker kos...koue bier...kyk uit op die see....goeie diens....great time..



**26 December**



**Andrew Whitaker**

Presenting Geel messie to Brian Heathfield at his house in Mtunzini



It has been 40 years – a lifetime has passed!

It feels like yesterday when we as soldiers of the 61 Mechanized Battalion Group fought bravely together during Operation Askari in the months of December 1983 to January 1984.

Today I would like to honour our brothers who paid the highest price. “Their names liveth for evermore” is an inscription one sees on many war memorials, and it is true, as long as those of us who came back, their families and their descendants, remember to tell the tale of those far-off but vividly remembered days. So let the roll be called once more, with each name answered on behalf of those whose voices were silenced forever.

<b>OPERATION ASKARI</b>		
<b>40 YEARS</b>		
<b>December 1983 - January 1984</b>		
No matter the skill of those involved, the fury of combat will always claim its casualties. These are the men who fell during combat in Operation Askari in the service of their country, they will not be forgotten.		
<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
79526935BT	Lieutenant K Claasen	18 Dec, 1983
74217076PE	Sergeant HA Oosthuysen	18 Dec, 1983
79364600BG	Rifleman LJ Van Rensburg	18 Dec, 1983
83890970SWK	Rifleman A Kamunga	18 Dec, 1983
83890418SWK	Rifleman E Mashika	18 Dec, 1983
77414357BT	Rifleman GC Schönborn	21 Dec, 1983
82475815BG	Trooper NW Niemand	28 Dec, 1983
81065039BG	Rifleman S Pretorius	27 Dec, 1983
81312464BG	Rifleman GP Le Roux	31 Dec, 1983
81173254BG	Rifleman DJ Schröten	31 Dec, 1983
81301293BG	Rifleman MC Smit	31 Dec, 1983
78487782BT	Rifleman JC Fourie	31 Dec, 1983
78373362BG	2 Lieutenant PM Liebenberg	31 Dec, 1983
76901420SP	Corporal A Aurelio	02 Jan, 1984
81251506BG	Rifleman B Geen	04 Jan, 1984
82585233BG	Rifleman HA Heyns	04 Jan, 1984
80238660BG	Rifleman GA Lennox	04 Jan, 1984
80211634BG	Rifleman DA Louw	04 Jan, 1984
80490592BG	Rifleman LF Pearson	04 Jan, 1984
79551099BG	Rifleman PD Pretorius	04 Jan, 1984
80264575BG	Lance Corporal WT Steenkamp	04 Jan, 1984
81285504BG	Rifleman JL Pretorius	04 Jan, 1984
81553596SP	Rifleman J Dala	10 Jan, 1984
80830409SP	Rifleman I Malonga	10 Jan, 1984
81059750BG	Corporal JH Roets	23 Jan, 1984

# ***In Memorium***

## ***1981 Alpha Coy Platoon 3***

**Margaret Heathcote**

Our beloved Kenneth has gone to be with the Lord. He fought long and hard and we now know that he is absent from the body but present with the Lord. He was an exceptional husband and the most amazing dad that anyone could have asked for. Thank you for keeping him in your prayers over these past few months! His memory will live on in our hearts forever.

**26 Feb 1962 to 23 Dec 2023**

**Lorraine Barry Martin**

Promoted to higher service. Sincere condolences to family and friends. May God comfort you all in this difficult time in Jesus name.

**Niel Bruwer**

I am so sorry to hear this. I will never forget his friendly morning greetings. He was a true 61 soldier. My sincere condolences

**Adriaan Kriel**

RIP Great warrior. Condolences to the family.

**Suzanne Meiring**

Condolence to the family. He is at peace after his long battle. You are in my thoughts. Much love.

**Wayne Riddell**

So dreadful. My sincere condolences for your loss. One of our brothers has fallen. May he rest in peace. Until Valhalla Kenneth Heathcote.





# CHRISTMAS DAY IN YEARS GONE BY

## KERSDAG UIT VERGANGE SE DAE

### KERSDAG IN DIE TOWNSHIPS 1986

**Mustie Benade**

#### *Kersoggend 1986*

Twee van ons Buffels versper die linkerskouer van die toegangsroete na en van die lokasie en die ander twee die regterskouer. Die padblokkade word beman deur 'n groep swaar gewapende polisiepersoneel met hul "mellow-yellow" voertuie.

Dit is nie 'n normale padblokkade nie. Spanning en angstigheid is aanvoelbaar. Ons troepe is senuagtig en paraat. Die polisie soek na iets of iemand! Ons is uitsluitlik ontplooi as ondersteuning vir die SAP.

Stadig ry ons met die Buffels in gelid die lokasie in om voort te gaan met patrollie. Die polisie nou agter ons en besig om die blokkade op te breek.

Van die manne is honger. Daar is 'n kafeetjie met 'n geroeste skewe sinkdak en ongeverfde

verwaarloosde mure in die lokasie wat ons soldate goedgesind is waar ons gereeld stop vir vis, Russians en slap chips. Die kafee se naam is ook "Fish and Chips" sommer so vryhand geverf in wit verf op 'n ruit. Die eienaar waag eintlik sy lewe om ons goedgesind te wees. Dit is waarheen die konvooi nou oppad is. Eers 'n paar draaie deur 'n deel van die lokasie maak toe verkas ons kafee toe.

Daar gekom spring Knersis, so 'n maer troep met nie 'n enkele tand in sy mond, seker so genoem oor sy haasbek, sonder geweer van die Buffel af en gaan die kafee in.

Die konvooi beweeg weer aan en los vir Knersis agter by die kafee. Iemand skree nog "haai, jou geweer!" maar Knersis vee die opmerking met 'n handgebaar weg en verdwyn die kafee in. Ons gaan regsom om die blok ry en sal hom optel met die kos wanneer ons weer verby ry. Solank hy ongesiens van buite in die kafee bly sal hy veilig wees..... "mmm-ja?!"... dink ek.

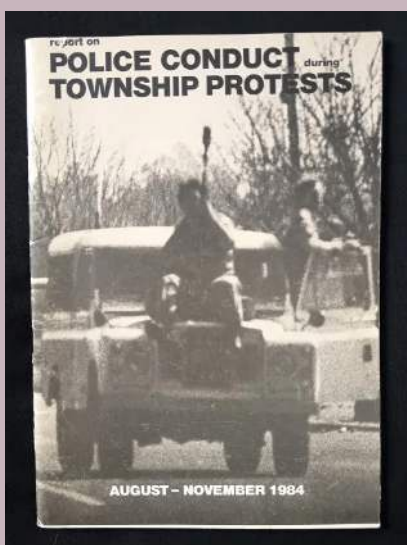


Ons beweeg stadig op in die stofstraat tussen die huise deur, nog so 200m voor ons die laaste draai links neem na die kafee waar Knersis is. Ons gaan 'n huis verby met 'n eensaam-enkel droë boom in die voortuin. Waar daar gewoonlik mense op die voorstoep sit is daar niemand nie. "Fok-Dennis, waar is almal?!!!" en ek draai vorentoe en kyk na sy rigting. Dennis draai na my toe om my te antwoord en sy oë verstar. Hy kyk by my verby en sy mond gaan stadig oop... oë gevries in hul kaste!

Instinktief koes ek met die omdraaislag agter die valplaat van die Buffel in en so met die afgaan sien ek daar in die middel van die stofpad regvoor die huis met die droë boom wat ons nounet verby is 'n persoon gehul in vlamme!

Als gebeur nou in milli-sekondes.

Ek spring sonder geweer oor die hoë rand van die nog bewegende buffel en hoop my "buddies" sal my "cover" as kak dalk die "fan strike" en dat ek nie 'n enkel breek met die landslag nie. Al wat in my gedagtes omgaan is om die vlamme te blus op die persoon daar in die middel van die pad. Voordat ek hom kon bereik val hy stadig agteroor op sy rug met arms krom in boë getrek wat nou verkrompe met kraaivingers uitreik na bo asof gevries in 'n fo-



to-oomblik en die vlamme op hom word minder en gaan dood.

Ek val op my knieë langs hom neer, ruik petrol-dampe. Hy kreun saggies en wieg heen en weer

met krom arms en kraaivingers versteen na bo. Sy swart hare is in sy kopvel ingesmelt soos plastiek. Sy oë rol groot oopgesper en vreesbevange in hul kaste, ooglede weggebrand. Sy lippe is verbrand en opgetrek in 'n grynsag van spierwit tande. Daar is 'n dik goïngtou om sy nek. Nou verstaan ek hoekom hy nie 'n woord uiter nie. Die tou het met die vlamme en hitte gekrimp en stywer om sy keel getrek, diep sy vlees in.

Denis uitasem en met sy geweer, kniel nou ook aan die anderkant van die man. "Radio vir 'n ambulans, die man leef nog!" sê ek aan Denis terwyl ek in een van my "amo-paoches" grou vir my "dankie-tannie knipmes". Moet die tou afkry die man kry nie behoorlik asem nie! Die man probeer praat maar met elke probeerslag bars sy lippe en bloed loop af in sy keel. Ek sal vinnig moet maak. Sy krom getrekte arm is in die pad. Ek vat aan sy hand en begin die arm grondtoe druk. Sy hand glip uit my hand en spring weer terug in sy oorspronklike posisie. In my hand bly agter die velle van sy vingers, afgestroop soos vingerhoede, sy vingers nou pienk gelaat.

Stadig staan ek op, onbewus van die skare nuuskierigges en troepe hier om my. Ek sien net Knersis raak wat by die voetekant van die man hier op die grond staan met die russians en slap chips in koerantpappierpakkie toegedraai vasgenyp onder sy arm. Ek kyk af na die kreunende man wat nou liggies begin bewe. Hy is besig om in skok te gaan. Sy hele liggaam is verbrand. Hy is naak, net die broekspype van sy knieë na sy enkels is oor, sy verslete skoene ongeskonde. Sy skaamhare is ook in sy vel in gesmelt en sy geslagsdele is swart verkool tot 'n mini ereksie.

Dit is maar stil op die Buffel. Niemand maak grappies nie... toe ... "haai Knersis is jy nie honger nie, maak oop daai kos dat ons kan eet?".... Knersis met die pakkie kos op sy skoot het stadig die koerantpakkie oopgevou, lank gekyk toe die pakkie russians en chips onaangeraak aangegee en binnemonds geprewel "ek eet nooitweer 'n russian nie!!".....



*Kersdag in Angola 1987*

Die vorige aand het ons probeer 'n pot maak deur ons ratpacks te kombineer. Dit was so sleg dat een makker die pot met kos en al in die veld gegooi het. Ons het toe maar koffie en dog biscuits vir oukersaand ge-eet. Ek kan onthou dat ek my voortande sou gee vir lemon creams saam met die koffie. Op Kersdag was ek lus vir Jose by Three Stars se vis en chips.

Die volgende dag het ons onder die reen gestort. Die weerlig het ons onder die seiltjie in gejaag. Daarna het die weerlig 'n boom naby ons raak geslaan en die systraal het drie van ons bemanning raak geslaan. Ek is so twee meter ver gegooi en het buite in die reen wakker geword met rooi weerligstraaltjies oral op my lyf. Niemand het blywende skade opgedoen nie, of so word beweer.

Die Vader het ons keer op keer gered uit die gevaar.



IAN SCOTT

*24 Dec 1983 – Saturday*

Recce chaplain conduct a Christmas church service at 09h00. His sermon touched our hearts. It is a privilege to be Gods soldiers in the struggle against communism.

At 12h00 we moved west in the direction of the Cahama/Chibemba road. About 2 km from the tar road one of the advance cars detonated a mine and burst out in flames.

Nobody killed, medics (19J) evacuate the wounded. Render speculative mortar fire – no enemy reaction.





Combat Team 3 depart to locate the enemy. They found nothing. We take up ambush positions next to the tar road at 19h00.

One of the recces told me that they captured a Scandinavian Red cross female and Cuban officer in a ambush yesterday on the Cahama/Chibemba road – cannot confirm whether it true.

### *25 Dec 1983 – Sunday*

Made enemy contact this morning at 07h00. Alpha section had one enemy kill.

During clearing of the target area we win two bags of soya beans marked:” From Ireland to the starving children of Angola” --- “wetters” and two bags of maize meal.

Spend the rest of the day in ambush positions. James van Zyl cook us a nice porridge with the maize meal, with the ratpack- a great Christmas dinner.



**Hannes Lombaard ·  
Kersfees 87 Angola 22A en gaste**



**Mervyn Carr  
Christmas lunch, Omuthiya  
December 1978.**



**Smit, Pheiffer  
Bravo 1987**



**1986**



# ***Toeval is nie altyd 'n toevallige ding nie***

***Willem Steenkamp***

Soos enige ander mens dra ek 'n handjievol sulke herinnerings in my geheue se knapsak rond. Party dinge vergeet jy mos nooit nie. My eerste speelding, 'n klein Bakelite bakkie wat my suster per ongeluk platgetrap het, tot my groot verdriet.

Die dag in 1944 toe 'n vreemdeling in uniform my ma 'n klapsoen gee en agter die wiel van ons klein Fordjie inskuif, en hoe my ma skatterlag toe ek beangs sê: "Mamma, daardie man steel ons kar."

Die dag toe ons van Op Savannah terugkeer, en ons marsjeer van die stasie af Kasteel-toe, en duisende mense van alle kleure en geure belyn ons roete en juig ons toe (ja, dit was daardie dae só ; dit was voor die dae van Flossie die Mindae Vliegtuig, toe die bosoerlog nog nie juis begin het nie). Op die trappe staan die burgemeester in al sy tierlantyntjies, en ons gee hom 'n knap "oë regs" in die verbygaan, en toe ons by die Kasteel se Van der Stel Poort inmarsjeer sien ek my vrou en ons twee seuntjies, en hulle maak nie 'n lawaai nie, want ons is nie lawaaierige mense nie, net 'n wuifie en 'n glimlaggie. Maar dis genoeg.

En dan daardie dag van 10 Junie 1980. Na veertig jaar is hy nog net so blink as ooit. Ek hoef net my oë te sluit of 'n sekere klank te hoor of 'n bekende gesig te sien, en dan rol daardie dag soos 'n speelfilm voor my uit. Dis eers later dat ek besef het hoe betekenisvol Smokeshell was. Dit was die vuurproef van die Weermag se nuwe en onbeproeft era, met 'n nuwe gevegsvoertuig, die Ratel, en 'n nuwe tipe eenheid, 61 Meg. Dit was nie pure toeval dat beide Generaal Viljoen en Generaal Holtzhausen in die aanval betrokke was nie: generaal Holtzhausen het baie gehelp met die formulering van die nuwe denke en uitrusting, en generaal Viljoen het 61 Meg tot stand gebring.

Soos 'n heel paar ander het ek daardie dag amper my blikkantientjie gesien, en dit het my lewe verander. Meteens het ek besef hoe min dinge daar in die lewe is wat werklik belangrik is.

Ek het ook dikwels gewonder waarom ek nog lewe terwyl soveel van ons manne daardie dag gesneuwel het. My oupa was 'n dominee en later 'n mediese dokter, met 'n geweldige geloof wat hy nooit verloor het nie, en hy het 'n teorie gehad: Baie mense wat die een of ander tyd hulself in gevaar bevind, is in daardie oomblik onsterflik omdat die Here vir hulle 'n toekomstige taak het.

Hy was oortuig dat hy minstens drie keer daardie oproep ontvang het. Maar vir my was daar geen sein nie ... tot 'n hele 14 jaar daarna, toe ek op 'n dag 'n sekere werklik belangrike besluit moes neem wat talle mense se toekoms nadelig sou affekteer as niks gedoen word nie.

En toe besef ek waarom ek daardie dag op Smokeshell gespaar is. Ongelowiges sal natuurlik sê dat dit onsin is, dis pure toeval dat ek nie raakgeskiet is nie. Ek dink egter aan wat 'n wyse ou eenkeer vir my gesê het: "Toeval is nie altyd 'n toevallige ding nie."

Maar tot dusver ... Vanaand draf daardie herinneringe deur my gedagtes, soos altyd, en dink ek aan die broedersbende waarvan ek daardie dag lid geword het – Grant en Gareth en Hennie en Gees, onder andere.

Mobilitate Vincere!  
Willem Steenkamp

# Diensplig VS Staande Mag

## Brig-Genl Tony Savides se Siening

### ‘n UITSIG VANUIT DIE OORKANT: DEEL 6/6

*Please remember that, as stated in Part 1 and throughout this series, the views and comments herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of any other person or organisation.*

*T Savides*

#### He ain't heavy, he's my brother

Despite what some may think, the PFs took no pleasure in the problems of their charges or the predicaments in which they found themselves from time to time, whether personal or legal. While opfoks and similar punishment for minor offences was sometimes acceptable, some offences demanded a great administrative and even investigative effort and could not be smoothed over by any form of “informal justice”. Even the most hardened PF NCO would soften when faced with NSM who had lost loved ones or had other problems that demanded empathy and acceptance, rather than a summary brush-off. The further in the training period this occurred, the more sympathetic and empathetic they would be – as the “them and us” became “us”.

There were exceptions, of course; for example when what the NSM concerned or his family wished or even expected was refused, and sometimes unfairly so; but when exposed, transgressors, especially the vindictive ones, were as severely dealt with as their subordinates may have been.

**Radaksie Nota:** Fotos en sketse in hierdie artikel is vir illustrasie doeleindes ingevoeg en die oorspronklike bron aangedui waar bekend.

#### The responsibilities

However, there were no rules or instructions written, unwritten or even tacit, that demanded or condoned the ill or unreasonable treatment of anyone in the military, both PF and NSM. Those who transgressed were doing so without the approval of “the system” and commanders at any level who condoned, encouraged or overlooked serious transgressions were as guilty thereof as those who committed the transgressions themselves. On the other hand, there were NSM who were or became masters at manipulating the system and goading the training personnel to the extent where self-restraint was difficult, even nigh on impossible. This was an unfortunate part of a system in which there were conscripts who did not want to be where they were,





let alone under the circumstances in which they were – but this is one of the yokes that the professional career soldier must appreciate, accept and work with – without exception.

PF misdemeanours and transgressions? I've had to deal with several in my time. For example, I've had to convene and conduct summary trials and formal investigations such as boards of enquiry; and I've sat on courts martial (which are to summary trials what the high court is to the magistrate's courts). I've had to refer cases to the Military Police and the SA Police, and I've had to decide on whether to refer cases to formal trials, other formal procedures or to not proceed with any actions.

Most unit commanders would have had similar experiences and responsibilities, as would sub-unit commanders. To prepare themselves for such things, PF personnel receive detailed training in Military Law and have to write and pass examinations on the subject and all the procedures covered in the MDC (Military Discipline Code).

Many promising military careers have ended rather summarily when PF personnel have been found guilty in military or civilian courts for any manner of offences – especially those of a serious nature such as negligence in the death or injury of a soldier, loss of or damage to defence of other government property or serious “non-military” offences.

I remember someone once referring to another member's receipt of his medal for 20 years good service as “a reward for 20 years of undetected crime”. An unfair statement perhaps but indicative of life in the forces in general. There are few in the PF, NSM, CF or Commandos who can honestly say that they have never transgressed the formal or the informal rules, or that they have “never” done anything illegal. For instance, there are numbers of men who years after their national service training or PF service will boast of how they deliberately “tested” (damaged or sabotaged) or “acquired” (stole) military equipment and yet who

complain at the same time about such equipment not always being available when required for operations. Any number of personnel have SADF/SANDF equipment illegally in their possession and see this as a coup rather than an offence. Today we boast about it while, when it suits us, complaining bitterly of others who damage or abuse state equipment and facilities or break the laws at any other level.

I am particularly irked by men who boast of how they damaged military equipment by all manner of deliberate yet illegal actions, such as “seeing how much punishment the equipment can take” – conveniently ignoring the fact that scarce components so damaged had to be replaced or repaired – often thus being unavailable when required to repair or replace equipment damaged in combat and which was urgently needed for further operations. Of course such equipment gets damaged under circumstances beyond the control of those concerned: in accidents, through inexperience or incompetence and any of many other “mitigating factors”; but deliberate damage to operational equipment remains inexcusable – especially when it is not the perpetrator's life that may have been at stake later when the equipment or component was unavailable or unserviceable!

Am I pontificating too much about this? Maybe - in some people's eyes; but certainly not in the eyes of those who were at the receiving end of a shortage of vital components such as axles, gearboxes and the like when in a dire situation in combat. I would hope that the persons who are guilty of such crass disregard for military equipment are less vitriolic about the minor misdemeanours perpetrated against them in opfoks and even rondfoks that eventually had a more positive effect on them than equipment shortages had on others.

## **Karma is a bastard!**

There is a lighter side to all this illegal stuff and many tales to be told of their hilarious consequences or “side effects” - with damaged equipment seemingly taking revenge on those causing such damage. A Ratel that had been driven unnecessarily and unduly harshly into a makalani palm exacted a stinging revenge for the abuse, humiliation and major damage it had sustained by dislodging from the same tree a nest of angry, stinging, buzzing hoard of red wasps onto the crew commander’s lap.

Others tell of thunder flashes and other pyrotechnic devices taking facial hair, skin and even partial hearing as revenge for them being used under “irregular” circumstances; 60mm mortar bombs detonating in or just above the barrels when accelerated by an additional charge of petrol; illuminating rockets setting fire to tents and other equipment and inflicting burns on the perpetrators, any number of broken and sprained limbs and joints as the result of “over-enthusiastic” employment of vehicles; vehicles being dumped in dams, rivers and even the sea, to the embarrassment of those responsible – the list goes on!

### **The system sometimes worked against itself**

Of course, the military “system” was far from perfect in many respects; not least in ensu-

ring that all of the basic necessities were available when and where needed. I am reminded of a visit to the operational area by a group of very senior Armscor personnel at the height of the war who, at virtually every base where they stopped, were told of the massive shortage of night-vision equipment. This had the group rather astounded as they knew that millions of Rand’s worth of such equipment (for a wide variety of applications) had quite recently been delivered to the SADF; not merely delivered, but each item also clearly marked (as was the practice at the time) with its monetary value.

This well-meaning practice was to show users just how much their equipment cost and that it should therefore be handled with due care; but it also had a negative effect! Apparently (so the story goes) when the group eventually visited a logistic facility (again, no names, no pack drill) they were astonished to find, in a particular store, night-vision equipment of every shape and size stacked from wall to wall and floor to ceiling. On enquiring why this equipment was not being delivered to its intended users, the response from the storeman in charge was (something to the effect of) “Are you crazy? Do you know how expensive this stuff is? Those guys will just fuck it up!”

I have it on good authority that this is, in essence, a true story; and well it may be; but it highlights two other aspects of the SADF about which many NSM will know little:





\* Personnel who took their own jobs so seriously that they actually believed that everything else – including operations- revolved around them; and that they were the guardians of whatever that job contained or entailed. Maybe this was because those who were not directly involved in operations were never made to feel that, in fact, they were as vital a part of operations as the combat elements themselves.

\* Information not always being passed right through the channels to where it was essential for some people or organisations to know certain things. This was usually either a misguided application of the “need to know” principle or a simple break-down in communication – or both.

Instead of the urgently-required night-vision equipment being sent forward as soon as it was received, a combination of the above two factors might have resulted in certain key links in the supply chain being unaware of what equipment was available and where; and for the proper priority to have been allocated to the equipment in the first place so that the store man in question would have been forewarned and forearmed, or overridden (and suitably dealt with) when he failed to deliver.

At the height of operations in the mid-1980s the Army had all but moved from a pull system of logistics to a push system. In the former, requirements were only satisfied as and when they were requested while in the latter, essential items were moved forward in anticipation of their being required.

But then of course, as Murphy said, “if anything can go wrong it will!” This might explain a shortage of certain essential foodstuffs like fresh meat and veggies but sugar being allocated at the rate of a 25kg bag per man, when the scale called for 100 grams or so! It might also explain why, when an urgent consignment of Ratel and SAMIL axles was needed deep inside Angola and was being prepared for air drop (by parachute), some kind-hearted soul back at the logistic unit decided to fill the spaces on the

pallets with cases of beer. A fine and much-appreciated gesture, which would have been more appreciated had the heavy axles not been loaded on top of the cases of beer (which gave their all – i.e. their contents - as they cushioned the weight of the axles on hitting the ground)!

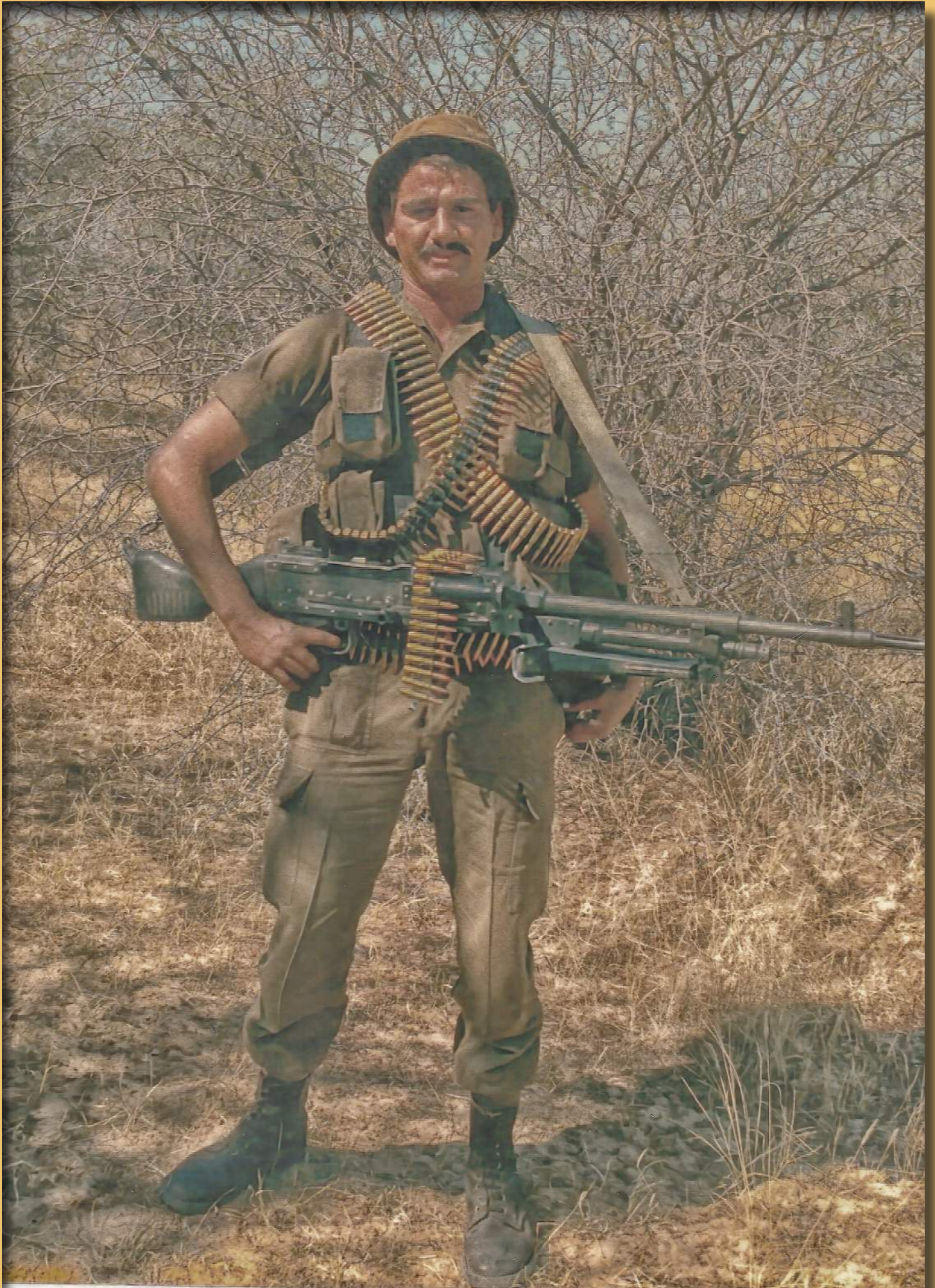
## **The good, the bad and the hilarious**

Ask any soldier to tell of his experiences during his service – especially basic training and operations - and he will turn to one or more of three events: the Good, the Bad and the Hilarious. The good will mostly relate to the times between the other two when mates could do and enjoy things otherwise precluded by the other two; and also to how men stood together at the best and worst of times. It will also include the exhilaration of hard training and severe combat and the successes achieved, and the merits of the military medical system. The bad will inevitably be the trauma of such events as combat and their aftermath; the effect on them, their comrades and their loved ones and the inefficiency of “the system” to support them fully in the aftermath. The hilarious will cover events, sayings and circumstances covering “all of the above”.

It should also be remembered that while basics may have seemed to be a free-for-all (during which everybody had it in for every NSM), as training progressed the PF and JL staff were increasingly evaluated on the progress that their NSM charges had made. Any failed (or successful) inspection, 2,4km trial, shooting score or examination was as much a reflection on the officers and instructors as it was on the NSM themselves.

I read once that someone said “I got all of my looks from my father - mostly looks of despair – but at least he loved me!” While many (most?) NSM might have felt that nothing satisfied “the ranks” and that all they dished out was criticism, scorn, derision and disappointment; they must (even after a decade or three) also look back and think “actually I think that they were very proud of us, maybe they even grew to love us!”







## **Pride? Certainly! Love? Don't push it!**

There are also other things that develop to almost urban legend status. For instance:

- When the heck does the RSM/company sergeant-major/staff sergeants ever sleep? Whatever we do and whenever, they just seem to miraculously appear – and do the buggers really have rear-view cameras in the berets?
- And how do these guys know exactly where to look to find something out of place, missing, dirty or unserviceable during inspection? (Well this is easily explained – from their own experiences on courses and other training where they were the “victims”!)
- How can “they” look so fresh and neat this morning at 04:30 when they had us up and about until way after midnight? (I also don't know!)
- How come I've come through several contacts unscathed yet a few choice words – or even a stare- from the RSM renders me incapable of speech?
- How did I change so from the sweet young guy I was when I “klaared in” a year ago, to the mean, troepie-punishing Junior Leader I am now?
- Do the PFs really have wives and children who love them?
- Just when did these PF and JL ogres actually become our comrades-in-arms and “one of us”?
- Are all male civvies really ugly, unkempt, stupid and lazy – or is that just my view?

A last point from my position as a Ratel aficionado:

Do you guys really think that you were the only ones who knew how to spin a Ratel's wheels on the tar, or that you invented the practice?!

## **In conclusion**

To us in the PF (and to our JL cohorts) national service was more than just another job. It might not always have been pleasant for us and our families, but it was part of our duty and something that those of us who wish to be remembered as professionals, were proud to be part of. Of the thousands of NSM who passed through our hands, very few were misfits, miscreants, criminals and no-goods; and we remain proud of what they achieved – especially in combat. And, as mentioned before, those of us who did not see the combat that they witnessed are proud if just a fraction of their glory is reflected towards us.

And so, we come to the end of my ramblings-on about the view from the other side. I trust that it has been of use to some, amusement to others and whatever else to whomever else. If you agree, absorb it, if you disagree, absorb it and if you don't like it, reject it! It is merely my view.

Please remember that, as stated in Part 1 and throughout this series, the views and comments herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of any other person or organisation.

## **A Parting Shot!**

On 19 June 1981, I had the honour of addressing the Junior Leader group of the Mechanised Leader Wing on completion of their training , and as they moved on to be integrated with the men with whom they would see operational service some five months later. This is what I told them and their loved ones who were present:

*“This is a great occasion that we attend here today – more than that, it is probably the most exciting and challenging milestone in the lives of each aspirant junior leader on parade before us.*

*‘Later today a great honour and privilege will befall you when you are awarded commissions or appointed NCOs in the SA Army. I say an honour as only relatively few men and women are selected for training as lea-*

*ders and even less qualify; and a privilege because the military leader, irrespective of his upbringing and background has the right to influence the well-being of those placed under his command and if necessary to commit them to situations where their very lives and even his own may depend on his decisions and actions.*

*‘It is imperative that any leader, but especially the military leader must, amongst his other characteristics, be a religious and believing man – a Man of Faith. The finest example of such a leader is, I believe, that given to us in the Gospel according to St Luke Chapter 7 verses 1 – 10:*

“When Jesus had finished saying all these things to the people, he went to Capernaum. A Roman officer there had a servant who was very dear to him; the man was sick and about to die. When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent to him some Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his servant. They came to Jesus and begged him earnestly: ‘The man really deserves your help. He loves our people and he himself built a synagogue for us.’ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the officer sent friends to tell him: ‘Sir, don’t trouble yourself. I do not deserve to have you come into my house, neither do I consider myself worthy to come to you in person. Just give the order and my servant will get well. I, too, am a man placed under the authority of superior officers, and I have soldiers under me. I order this one ‘Go’ and he goes; I order that one ‘Come’ and he comes: and I order my slave ‘Do this’ and he does it. Jesus was surprised when he heard this; he turned around and said to the crowd following him, ‘I have never found such faith as this. I tell you, not even in Israel! The messenger went back to the officer’s house and found his servant well’

‘Ek haal baie graag hierdie gedeelte uit Lukas aan want die hoofman oor honderd waarvan vertel word, beklemtoon so baie van die eienskappe wat ons graag in ons juniorleiers soek – ek noem hulle:

\* Vers 2: Hy besef die waarde van sy ondergeskiktes.

\* Vers 3: Hy het sy onderdane lief of, in ons moderne taal, hy respekteer hulle; en maak nie misbruik van sy gesagsposisie nie.

\* Vers 4: Sy ondergeskiktes op hulle beurt het vertroue in hom, respekteer hom en ondersteun hom.

\* Vers 6: Hy is nederig en skuil nie agter die gesag van sy aanstelling nie.

\* Vers 8: Hy besef sy verantwoordelikhede en die gesag waarom hy beskik; maar misbruik dit nie. Hy is ook nie skaam om sy professie of roeping te verklaar nie.

\* Vers 9: Hy het geloof en is ook nie skaam om dit te verklaar nie.

\* Vers 10: Hy is beloon vir sy geloof – nie met geld of rykdom nie, maar met die wete dat sy ondergeskikte weer gesond is.

*‘Hierdie jong manne op parade kan as “hoofmanne oor 50” beskou word en kan altyd hierdie geërde en gelowige man van die Bybel as ’n voorbeeld vir hulle self en hulle ondergeskiktes voorhou. Daar kan seersekerlik geen meer navolgenswaardige voorbeeld wees nie.*

‘Although this little incident in the New Testament covers barely a quarter of a page, one could fill volumes evaluating and expanding thereon. Most significant of all though is the statement that no one has yet been seen to have had more faith – the significance I feel is in the fact that this man of faith was a soldier and a leader of men and it raises the Soldierly above the levels of the ordinary and gives us a charge to carry on our profession with Pride whilst maintaining the high standards and values set out for us in this passage.

‘Accept this as a challenge of leadership and command therefore as just that – a challenge.



Measure yourself against the qualities of the good leader. Tackle your new job with earnest and dedication and enjoy this experience of your first command whether it be operational or in training.

‘U het hard gewerk om tot hier te kom maar glo my, die moeilikste lê nog voor. U sal soms in die versoeking staan om ‘slap te lê’ en foute en probleme oor die hoof te sien. Waak egter hierteen – want u durf dit nie toelaat nie! ’n Verkeerde woord of ’n vloekwoord of ’n onoordeelkundige besluit of handeling kan lei tot ’n afname in u vermoë om te lei en self tot lewensverlies. Moet NOOIT u selfbeheersing verloor nie! Wanneer u in die versoeking staan of weet nie wat om te doen nie – vra!

‘Vra vir u meerderes, vra vir u ouers, moet selfs nie bang of skaam wees om vir u ondergeskiktes te vra nie – doen dit net op ’n manier dat hulle nie hulle agting vir jou verloor nie. Onthou wat u tydens hierdie kursus geleer het, pas dit aan

volgens omstandighede en pas dit toe met vertroue. U sal dan nie verkeerd loop nie.

*‘I charge you therefore both as citizens of our wonderful country and as military leaders to stride confidently into your future.*

*“Remember that it is an honour and a privilege to lead, rather than just another job. Remember that the well-being of your subordinates is now your prime responsibility – train them, guide them and protect them and if necessary be prepared to give your life for them.”*

### Finally

I would love to believe that all of the JLs took my message to heart and acted accordingly throughout their tenures as JLs - and that the PF members attending did likewise - but am realistic enough to realise that not all would have or would have been able to.

End of Part 6

END OF SERIES



# ***The 61 Mech Bn Gp Diaspora***

## ***Part 5***

### **THE WITWATERSRAND RIFLES**

The term “diaspora” originates from an ancient Greek word that signifies the act of scattering. This accurately describes the actions of people belonging to a diaspora, as they disperse from their native land to various locations around the world, while simultaneously sharing and promoting their culture along the way.

This is analogous to 61 Mech.

Just like the wind that awakens and brings rejuvenation as it moves along, the days of the 61 Mech Bn Gp were pioneering days filled with opportunities. For the national servicemen who were fortunate enough to go through the rigorous training of 61 Mech, a new challenge awaited. Once they completed their National Service, they were assigned to citizen force regiments. The Regiments force welcomed some of the most skilled and capable young soldiers into their ranks. These soldiers brought with them their expertise, top-notch training, and valuable combat experiences, adding value to the regiments they joined.

*Article by  
Lt Col Kevin Townsend and Jaap Lourens*





Among many others, the following 61 Mech members served with THE WITWATERSRAND RIFLES (Poll on 61 Mech Facebook Group on 13 July 2023).

Johan Vd Westhuizen  
Manie Bekker  
Fred Pretorius  
David Johannes Hamman  
Karel Koen

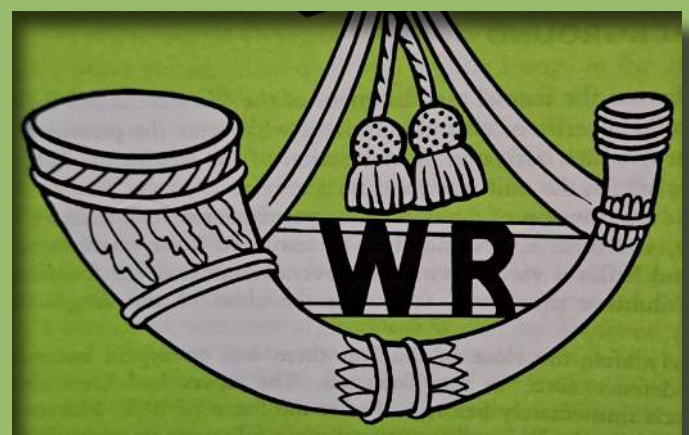
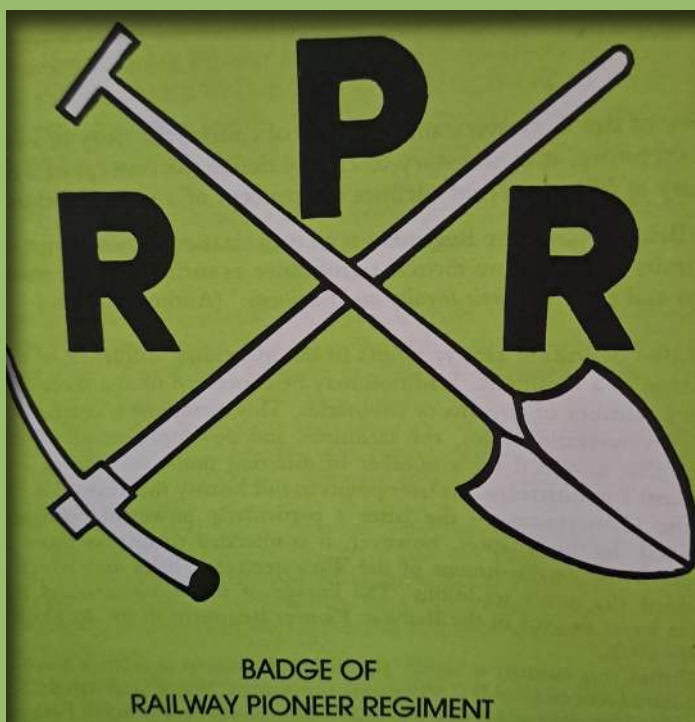
The Regiment was raised in 1899 as the Railway Pioneer Regiment (RPR) and drew its members from the mining areas of the Witwatersrand to support the British war effort. The Regiment's primary task was the rebuilding of railway lines and bridges which had been destroyed by the Boer forces but it was also involved in a number of notable battles where many casualties were suffered, including that of Maj Seymour, an American mining engineer and founder of the Regiment. The members of the Railway Pioneer Regiment were also skilled in the handling of explosives, from their training at the gold mines, amongst others.

In 1903 the RPR was disbanded and formed the nucleus of a new regiment, the Witwatersrand Rifles (WR), established by decree on 1st May 1903. The members were drawn mainly from the mining communities across the Reef, with a predominance of members drawn from the East Rand.

Between wars, the Regiment was very active boasting a large brass band and top-class shooting team, and excellent individual marksman. Many prestigious events and trophies were won by the Regiment, including the Queen's Medal.

The Transvaal Light Infantry was absorbed into the the Witwatersrand Rifles in 1907, and subsequent to 1914 the Rand Rifles became part of the Witwatersrand Rifles.

A number of prominent citizens of the time were associated with the Regiment including Sir Lionel Philips who served as Honorary Colonel.



In 1914, the Regiment was mobilized for the German South West Africa campaign where it acquitted itself with distinction, winning a battle honour for its efforts.

Upon its return from South West Africa, many members volunteered to join the 1 South African Infantry Brigade and were posted to 3 SA Infantry Regiment for service in Egypt followed by the Western Front. Members of the Regiment were present at the battle of Delville Wood. Prominent amongst the WR members was Col E. F. Thackeray, CMG, DSO who commanded the SA force which held out in the Wood under such horrific conditions. A member of the Witwatersrand Rifles, Capt (later Lt Col) L.F. Sprenger was twice decorated for his role at Delville Wood amongst a number of other WR members who were also recognized for their bravery. A number of WR members never exited the Wood or were taken prisoner.

In addition, the Regiment supplied troops for the East Africa campaign where they again acquitted themselves well.

Between WW1 and WW2, the Regiment continued to participate in training and shooting and was mobilized during the 1922 Rand Revolt and played a part in suppressing the insurrection.

In 1930 the Regiment became affiliated to the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) and later adopted the Cameronian uniform and Black Douglas tartan. The Cameronians were formed in 1881, and disbanded in 1968, but are still active as a Regimental Association. The Cameronians had the nickname "The Poison Dwarfs".

The Regiment was again mobilized at the outbreak of WW2 and though initially utilized in many internal roles including the training of troops at Barberton for the North African Campaign, it was finally sent "up North" in 1943 after being amalgamated



with the De La Rey Regiment, and became the WR/DLR, as part of the 6th SA Armoured Division's 12 Mot Brigade. At this time, the Regiment also became known as the "Royal Boere" and the watchword coined "ODJ" "Op Die Job" by Lt-Col (Later Brigadier) Jack Bester (DSO and Bar). The phrase ODJ still is used today in the Wit Rifles Regimental Association, as part of the tradition. The 2nd Battalion WR was used to provide reinforcements to many other famous units like the Transvaal Scottish. A number of actions took place in the Western Desert and later the WR/DLR formed part of the 6th SA Armoured Division which was prominent in the Italian Campaign. During this campaign, the Regiment excelled and was awarded 13 Battle Honours with members receiving numerous decorations for valour.





Subsequent to WW2 the Regimental HQ was moved from The Drill Hall in Johannesburg to the Government Village, next to Rand Airport in Germiston where it remained until 2004. The HQ was then moved to "Fort Bear", a building in Barlow Street, Industries West, Germiston where it remained until 2020.



Up until 1961, the Regimental Badge had the Scottish Thistle surrounding the Maltese Cross and Rifles, as well as the British Crown on top. It carried the motto "Pro Deo Rege Patria: For God, King and Country". After South Africa's separation from the Commonwealth in 1961, the

Regimental Badge changed, to adopt the star of the Cameronians on top, instead of the British Crown, as well as the Scottish Thistle now replaced by the South African National flower, the Protea, surrounding the Maltese Cross and Rifles. The motto changed to "Pro Deo Et Patria: For God and Country"

During the 1970's and 1980's the Regiment participated in many SWA Border operations, as well as South African internal border deployments, like Northern Transvaal as well as township peacekeeping duties, and in 1981 became a mechanized infantry unit but continued to serve in a variety of roles under 73 Bde and later 7 Infantry Div.



WR Soweto 1985

Amongst these, the Regiment took part in regular brigade exercises at the Army Battle School Lohatla, such as Sweepstag and Suiderkruis, Excalibur 2, amongst others. The Regiment made numerous trips down to Lohatla, to partook in these exercises, thus ensuring competence and readiness as a mechanized Infantry unit, should the unit be called upon to serve in this role. The Regiment made use of the Ratel IFV, and mechanized Infantry fighting tactics. The Regiment maintained a high standard of readiness through the years, with regular training of its members such as the conversion exercises in the 80's, from a normal to a mechanized Infantry unit. Through the years the regiment also maintained the shooting team, with great success.



WR Lohatla



Kmdt Job 1981





Lohatla Photo Credit - Steyn Fourie



Photo Credit - Joe Cole



WR Lohatla



In 1994 the Regiment became fully integrated and representative of the new South Africa, eventually having a black Commanding Officer, a black RSM, and is staffed by a personnel strength of 98% black members. The Regiment served in the Sudan and Central African Republic in peacekeeping roles as well as many border control operations. It was also mobilized to assist with security arrangements during general elections, during a major hospital workers' strike, and for border protection operations as part of Operation Corona.

In summary, the Regiment served the constitutionally-based Governments of the Country from its founding, through the years of the Union (60 years), the "first" Republic (33 years), and most recently the government of our new and properly democratic new Republic since 1994.



## Bambata Rifles



Photo Credit - Douglas Torrance 1917



Photo Credit - David Peter O'Halloran 2017

In 2020 after a long process spearheaded by the Reserve Force Council, a number of Regimental names were nominated for change to move away from colonial and other names that were deemed to no longer be representative of the new South Africa. Despite resistance from the Regiment and its members, the Regimental Council and the Regimental Association, a unilateral decision without any consultation was taken to rename the Witwatersrand Rifles as Bambatha Rifles. This despite the original name not having any colonial or other unacceptable connotations in terms of the name change policy. In December 2020, the name Witwatersrand Rifles ceased to exist and was re-named Bambatha Rifles. Witwatersrand Rifles became part of history.

## Witwatersrand Rifles The Legacy Uphold

However, the fond memories of those who served in the Regiment, the battle honours, and many campaigns, with a very rich and proud tradition and history, are under the flag of the Witwatersrand Rifles and cannot be transferred by a change of name. The Regiment also had to vacate the HQ "Fort Bear" in Germiston at this time, leaving the Regiment with no place for the displayed items and many other Regimental assets.

This forced change of name led to the resignation of the distinguished Honorary Colonel, Col (Dr) John Job, the disbandment of the Regimental Council and the cutting of ties between the Regimental Association and the new Regiment as of December 2020.

The Witwatersrand Rifles Regimental and Family Association however is still going strong, with around 300 members and associates. The Association has its own Pipe





Band and besides ex-WR members it is home to a number of members from other regiments and arms of service.

The Association and Pipe Band retains the Wit Rifles standard and colours, the original Witwatersrand Rifles black Maltese Cross on the green background, as well as the original battle honours as displayed on the banner of the Pipe Major. The Association dress consists of a black jacket with the old Witwatersrand Rifles badge (prior to 1961), white shirt, regimental tie and the original Douglas Tartan Trews, with black shoes.

As a headdress, the green Glengarry is worn. The Association holds regular meetings, a yearly formal ODJ luncheon (since 1946), a year-end function, as well as the regular annual Wits Week parade, and observes and attends various parades and commemoration services, including the Barberton Parade. The Wits Rifles/ Regiment De La Rey cenotaph headstone is now located at the Ditsong Museum of Military History in Saxonwold, Johannesburg, where the Wits Week Parade also now takes place. Regimental silverware, dating back to 1903, is on display at the Rand Club. The Association also has a regular newsletter, the "Black Hackle"



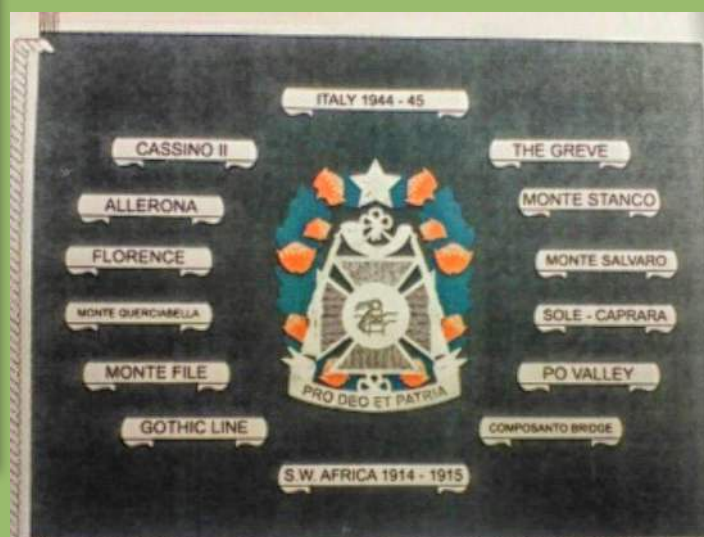
**Jaap Lourens**

17 April 2021

Vandag was die jaarlikse gedenkparade, van Witwatersrand Rifles, Wits Week parade, gehou by die Johannesburgse Militêre museum. Ons het ook vandag 'n 98 jare vete- raan van die Italiaanse Veldtog, uit WO2, by ons gehad.



Fred Engelbrecht en sy gesin, 98 jarige Veteraan van die Italiaanse Veldtog, wat vandag aan Witwatersrand Rifles se gedenkparade deelgeneem het, selfs in die verbymars saam met ons ingeval het. Saluut aan jou Fred!





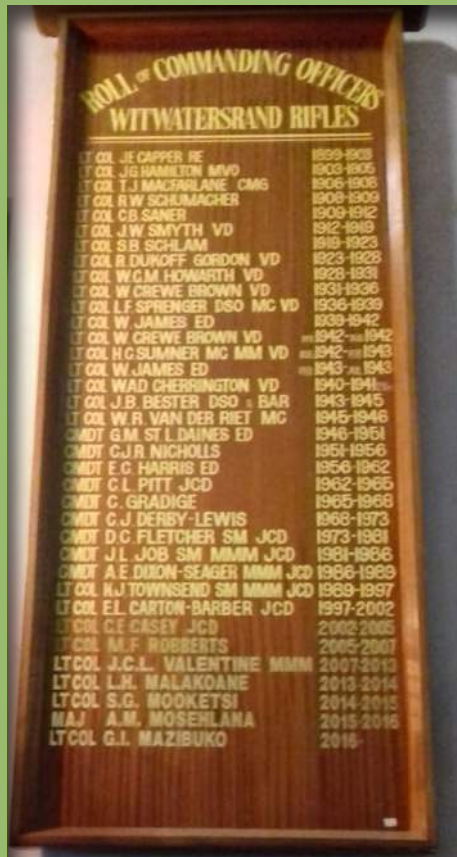


Motto: "Pro Deo Et Patria" ( For God and Country )  
 Regimental Tartan: Black Douglas  
 Regimental Affiliation: The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles )  
 Regimental Alliance: The King's Own Scottish Borderers  
 Regimental March: Within a mile o' Edinburgh Toone

As a Rifle Regiment Wit Rifles has maintained the tradition of not carrying colours and as a result, the Regimental Battle Honours are displayed on the banner of the Regimental Pipe Major.

### Regimental Battle Honours:

South West Africa: 1914 – 1915



Italy 1944 -1945

Cassino 2  
 Alleron  
 Florence  
 Monte Querciabella  
 Monte Fili  
 Gothic Line  
 The Greve  
 Monte Stanco  
 Monte Salvato  
 Sole Caprara  
 Po Valley  
 Camposanto Bridge



# ***BROWNS, BOOTS, BOSHOD AND WEBBING***

***Brig Genl Tony Savides***

*Training, opfoks and operations,  
'Hurry up and wait' a common dispensation.  
For the tough and not the queasy,  
Often hard, never easy,  
Army life had its ups and downs,  
As we earned the right to wear "The Browns"!*

The ubiquitous Nutria-coloured field dress of the SADF has become synonymous with, and symbolic of those who participated in the so-called Border War from sometime in 1972, when nutria was first issued in increasing quantities, to the end of the war in 1989. From the final approval of the new field dress in September 1968, until well into 1972 there were very few sets of this dress in general use, so it is more relevant to the era after mid-1972. As with most things in the military, the nutria field dress was given a popular name by the troops and was simply referred to as "Browns" in both English and Afrikaans, thus adding a new word to the lexicon of the South African soldier.

## **PROJECT REMBLOK**

The SA Army project to develop new field dress was Project Remblok (brake block in Afrikaans). Ratel aficionados will recognise the name of the SADF's project officer as Col JT (Sarge) Nell, he who was also the project officer on the ICV programme and later the Ratel evaluations.

Unlike the case with many other SADF projects over the years, the equipment developed did not take its name from the project name, nor was it given a name according to the SADF's list of possible equipment names. It simply took its name from the colour of the material used! Thus, not Remblok Field Dress, nor some indigenous animal or insect name, but Nutria Field Dress.

## **NUTRIA?**

Indeed, and while the name has given rise to many views and myths and some conjecture, it is perhaps not quite what many think. Thus, one many well ask, "what is Nutria"?

**Nutria: Noun:** /'nju:triə/ or 'nü-trē-ə Like many other things, "nutria" has different meanings in different environments:

**Nature: Nutria:** "a large South American semiaquatic rodent (*Myocastor coypu* - also





called a coypu) with webbed hind feet and a round nearly hairless tail, and with mid-brown coloured fur.”

**Paints and colours: Nutria:** “a warm, mid-brown colour with the Hex Colour code #75663e, the RGB colour code 117,102,62, and the BCC code 139. Nutria in the Pantone Textile Cotton extended list has the PMS number 18-0825 TCX”.

**The SADF: Nutria:** “Browns”! In the Dictionary of South African English nutria is noted as: “nutria, noun/'nju:triə/. Military. The brown uniform of the defence forces” Cf. browns”.

### **FIELD DRESS BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD STILL BE BROWN!**

Interestingly, the colour initially chosen was not Nutria, but rather “Olive Brown”, which per one definition is a warm colour primarily from the green colour family. It has a definite olive-green tint and appears more yellowish-green than brown. However, according to another definition the colour is a warm colour from the yellow-brown family - more the colour of coffee or cocoa with a dash of milk. Perhaps the colour variations of olive brown were just too much to consider, and the final choice was a dark brown, almost the colour of dark chocolate.

### **SELECTING THE COLOUR**

When Nutria dress was first introduced there was a rumour that the material and the colour had been specifically and scientifically developed and had properties such as (but not limited to) reflecting or absorbing infra-red light. In fact, the selection was perhaps more one of personal taste than science!

According to the late Col Sarge Nell, once the preliminary design of some of the clothing items was completed, a few samples were made up using several “military” colours. There was the ubiquitous drab olive and jungle green of British and Commonwealth armies, khaki

and a brown. Sarge was not sure if it was nutria at that stage or olive brown, but as the committee mulled over the choices, the chairman, who happened to be the Minister of Defence, the late JJ (Oom Jim) Fouché, pointed to the brown and said “daardie een!” End of discussion.

Whether Oom Jim thought the brown was a good serviceable, colour, or merely liked the brown or just did not like the “British” green and khaki, is not recorded, but that he chose the colour is a fact, and the rest, to coin a phrase, is history! Given the country’s history and the wearing of khaki over several decades, khaki was not even vaguely considered. It could be that a mere two years since South Africa became a republic, many things “British” were an aversion to people like Oom Jim, but that is pure conjecture - or is it?

### **FROM FIELD DRESS TO BROWNS**

Thus, as far as the SADF was concerned, nutria was merely a colour (in effect more a chocolate brown than a mid-brown) but as the colour of the field dress, it became less relevant, and the new field dress became “Browns” (or “the Browns”) and became a term synonymous with the Border War. To many who wore the Browns in service, it is an iconic reminder, even the very symbol, of their service.

There is even a web site and two Facebook pages that now incorporate Nutria or Browns in their titles. These are “Nutria.co.za” and on Facebook, “We wore browns – We were soldiers”, and “NRCC - Nutria Reenactors & Collectors Club”. Quite often the SADF of the Border War era is also referred to by some as “The Brown Army”, even though nutria was worn by all the arms of the SADF.



While a symbol itself, the degree of fading in the colour and increasing “casualness” of the material over the period of service, became a symbol on its own with faded, well-worn Browns being almost a badge of honour for the “Ou Manne” vs the dress of the “Blougatte” with their newly issued, crisp, dark chocolate brown, nutria clothing.

In many cases once the browns had begun fading, especially after months on the border, they were not unlike the olive brown originally selected, until they eventually took on that almost translucent pinkish-brown hue that the “Ou Manne” wore with pride. When torn or otherwise unserviceable, browns had to be replaced with new, and many an Ou Man had to suffer the ignominy of wearing crisp, new browns, standing out between their mates in their faded browns.

## BOOTS



A n -sadf\_boots\_and\_browns\_by\_robertvorster o t h -  
e r i t e m  
of personal equipment of particular interest to many is the lowly, yet underrated and essential boot. Up until the early 1960s the general issue “army boot” was what was known as “Boots ABR&F” (Boots, Army, Rank and File). This was a leather boot with a smooth leather sole that had served the

UDF and the SADF well, sometimes with the sole covered with hobnails, but mainly “as issued”. It was a well proven item of footwear in many ways but with the change in the SA Army from a staid conventional organisation to one which embraced mobile warfare and, especially, one, which from the early 1960s also had to adapt to the requirements of Counter-insurgency warfare, a new boot was required.

This too was a development under Project Remblok. There were several iterations and samples and eventually a boot was developed that was not merely reliable, comfortable and hard-wearing, but was also the envy of others.

It is said (unsubstantiated) that when the UN-TAG forces were deployed in SWA/Namibia and soldiers of the different contributing forces took to “evaluating” the equipment of others and looking to swap, one item of SADF equipment that was much sought after was the boots. The fancy stuff with which the visitors were issued could just not stand up to the rigours of the task and the environment at hand.

## BOSHOED



Of all some 30 items that make up the nutria field dress, one piece has itself become iconic i.e. the Bush Hat, or as it is more generally referred to in both Afrikaans and English, the “Boshloed”. It too has at least two Facebook pages i.e. “Orde van die Boshloed” (“Order of the Bush Hat”) and “Boshloed Buddies”. While replicas are quite freely available nowadays, the Ou Manne cherish the original well-



worn, almost shapeless and faded boshod that they wore so many years ago. The original boshod was a direct copy of the British version.

## WEBBING



There is a truism based on the amount of equipment he carries that “an infantryman is someone one hangs things on”. This is, however, of necessity, not for the fun of it and would not be possible with the web equipment (or webbing) that, in one form or another, has been a critical part of the soldier’s combat equipment for centuries. It holds his ammunition, bayonet, rations, cleaning kit, personal hygiene items, field dressing, maps, compass, and anything else required for general or specific operations.

Webbing is usually modular allowing for the addition or removal of items as necessary. In combat order, webbing might be restricted to basic items such as ammunition pouches, water bottle, etc, while in full marching order it may include all that the soldier needs for several days including spare clothing, sleeping bag, extra ammunition, water and rations, and may weigh as much as 50kg (or even more).



Parallel to development of the nutria field dress was the almost continuous development of web equipment to replace the old British Pattern 42 webbing, which had been in use in the SADF from its predecessor the UDF, through to around 1963 when a new webbing system had been developed and issued. Project Remblok addressed the further development of this Pattern 63 webbing until the approval and issue of the Pattern 70 webbing, which started as Pattern 68.



## HELMETS

Interestingly, from 1964 to around 1981 the two-piece French-styled steel combat helmet with its plastic inner was in service and did not change at all until replaced by the Aramid helmets. The inner was commonly referred to as the "Doiby" and was often worn as a protective headpiece during general training, work parties, and the like. Painted red, it was worn by soldiers who were being punished as part of a sentence of "CB" (confined to barracks). The new Aramid helmets were not developed under Project Remblok.



## THE ROLE OF SARGE NELL

The late Col (Dr) JT "Sarge" Nell, perhaps better recognised for his role in the development of the Ratel ICV and its variants, was involved in Project Remblok, from its inception through to its final reports but his involvement in this field did not end there. He was later involved with the evolution of the webbing system after 1970, and with the further evolution of the SANDF's field dress and other components under the "Soldier 2000" programme and "Project Abund" from 1982/83.

## COSTS

When the nutria field dress was finally cleared for mass issue in 1972, the full field dress set cost a whopping R 113,87 per soldier! In 2023 terms this equates to around R 8,560 per set.

ITEM	HOEVEEL- HEID	KOSTE
Laphoed	1	R1.25
Hemde, geveg	2	R6.00
Broeke, geveg	3	R12.00
Baadjies, geveg	2	R20.00
Stewels, geveg, pre	2	R10.76
Sokkies, pre	4	R2.72
Oortrektruie	1	R4.04
Seillyfband, 1½"	1	.26
Balaclavatus	1	.75
Leerhandskoene, pre	1	R1.50
Reënjas	1	R7.50
Nekserp	1	.50
Onderbroeke, "jockey"-tipe	4	R1.84
Onderhemde, "airtex" atletiese tipe	4	R1.44
Sportbroekies	2	R1.58
Onderhemde, frokkie-tipe	2	.68
Plakkies, pre	1	R1.00
Wit seilskoene, pre	2	R1.74
Groot handdoeke	2	R1.24
Patrollie-handdoek	1	.25
Toiletsakkie	1	R1.50
Wekssakkie	1	.50
Metaalspieël-tjie	1	.05
Seepbakkie	1	.05
Skulling	1	R5.00
Soldatesak	1	R3.00
<b>TOTAAL</b>		<b>R87 .15</b>
<b>7.2.2 Seremoniële drag :</b>		
Baret of pet (gemiddelde prys)	1	R2.55
Kruisbande	1	.54
Borsel	1	.09
Baadjie	1	R7.53
Hemde	1	R2.33
Skoene, pre	1	R6.20
Dasse	1	.38
Broeke	1	R5.81
Sokkies (dun) pre	2	.88
Petkenteken	1	.11
Kraagkentekens, pre	1	.12
SA-kentekens	4	.12
Skouertitels pre	1	.06
<b>TOTAAL</b>		<b>R26.72</b>
<b>Totaal- 7.2.1 en 7.2.2</b>		<b><u>R113.87</u></b>



# ***Santa Maria, Sandale en Tekkies***

***Dawid Lotter***

*So oor uitrusting, toerusting en uniform gepraat; ons moet nie die klein komponente van die SA Soldaat se klerekas vergeet nie. Dit is dinge soos onderbroeke, sandale en tekkies. Jy het mos aan die Weermag behoort; so bepaal die Verdedigingswet. Die Weermag word jou ma en pa. En soos gepas het jy volle versorging gekry. Kos..Klere..Tug – die hele spektrum van Genesis tot Openbaring.*

## **Die Santa Maria Onderbroek**

Synde jy staatseiendom is, het die Army jou van kop tot tone uitgerus, met onder andere ook vyf onderbroeke. Gedurende die sestigerjare was die snit baie soos vandag se Jockey broekie, maar met baie wye pype, sodat dit die indruk geskep het van 'n bloomer – baie kuis. Dit is waarskynlik waar die naam “Santa Maria” vandaan kom. Toe die eerste generasie nu-



deernisvolle klank op die oor hê, maar mens moet jou nie laat lei deur name nie. Dit kan bedrieglik wees. Want die Santa Maria was alles behalwe deernisvol.

Die Kwartiermeester-Generaal het verseker 'n galge sin vir humor gehad sover dit onderbroeke aanbetref.

Maar wat ek wel verseker weet is dat 'n onderbroek 'n definitiewe funksie het sover dit higiëne en beskerming aangaan. Om dus te kwalifiseer as 'n onderbroek moet hy aan 'n paar spesifikasies voldoen. Dit wat hang, moet hy knus omvou en ondersteun.

Hiermee het die Santa Maria hopeloos tekort gekiet. Om dié effek tot sy reg te laat kom, moes jy die rek tot bokant jou naeltjie trek.



tria onderbroeke gedurende die sestigs deur die Weermag in gebruik geneem was, het die naam “Santa Maria” outomaties saam gekom. Waar die onvanpaste ?.... naam sy ontstaan gehad het, is een van daardie vrae wat honderde menigs ontlok. Ongeag die oorsprong van sy naam, sal ek volstaan by die goue uitweg – Ek weet nie verseker nie.

Tot vroeg in die 1980's was die nutria onderbroek standaard. Sy noemnaam mag dalk 'n

En dan het jy onmiddelik met 'n tweede probleem te doen gehad. 'n Onderbroek moet mos

dit wat hang isoleer van die lieste. 'n Tipe buffer vorm en sweet absorbeer. Om dan die “bo die naeltjie” oefening te kon regkry, het die Santa Maria sulke ekstra groot gate vir jou bene gehad.

En dit het die derde effek veroorsaak. Hy beskerm niks, buffer niks, absorbeer niks, en dit wat kan uitval, dié het dan ook. Vernaam met sekere PT bewegings en taktiese oefeninge soos vuur-in-beweging. Niks lekker as daardie hangende gedeeltes so wissel tussen die linkerbeen en regterbeen se gate nie. Veral ook met paradegrond drill.

'n Onderbroek moet dan ook mos jou skaamte bedek. So 'n paradys-kuisheid-vyeblaar. Maar ook so dat dit wat in die vroegoggend regop staan so effe kan beheer. Want dit wat regop staan het 'n wil van sy eie, hy luister nie na enige vorm van dissipline nie. Hy doen wat hy wil, veral soggens. En die Santa Maria het hom baie Vryheid van beweging verleen – amper so 'n sirkulent effek gehad.

Om die nanagdroom se stoom op te vang, was ook nie 'n sterk punt in die Santa Maria mondering nie, weens die wye gate vir die bene. So jy het maar in jou swart PT broekie geslaap om jou waardigheid te kon behou, en jou lakens te spaar.

Weens die wye beengate het hy ook die geneigdheid gehad, veral na 'n paar wasse, om so geleidelik in jou boudspleet in te trek. Soos daardie wat die Sumo stoeiers dra. Niks lekker om heeltyd 'n stuk materiaal van jou hol af te trek, so deur die materiaal van jou nutria gevegsbroek nie.

En dan het die Santa Maria so 'n breë rek gehad om hom bo te hou gehad. Na 'n paar maal se was het daardie rek sy elasticiteit verloor. Dan het hy afgesak oor jou boude, veral met marsjeer, tot hy so 'n ring onder jou nutria gevegsbroek gevorm het. Sou jy hom toelaat om ongehinderd verder af te sak, het hy dan uiteindelik ter ruste gekom so stukkie teen jou linker lies af en die ander helfte teen die regter lies af.

Hy was in verskeie groottes vervaardig – Groot.. Groter.. Grootste. Ek het in 1975 net so oor 56 kg geweeg, so die Kwartiermeester het nie my grootte aangehou nie.

Later is die reël verslap oor hierdie uniformstuk en elkeen het maar sy Ackermans onderbroek gedra. Een groot voordeel van die Santa Maria was die waarde as 'n stoflap, onverbeterlik. Want stoflappe se enigste voorwaardes is, groot genoeg vir die taak en katoensag. Daaraan het die Santa Maria voldoen.

En so teen 1984 het die Kwartiermeester-Generaal homself van sy verkeerde weë bekeer en sy martelmetodes vaarwel toegeroep. Die Santa Maria is opgevolg deur 'n meer hangende, of staande verbruikersvriendelike produk. Die eerste paar besendings was seker maar 'n fabrieksfout, want dit was 'n tipe van 'n hipster met 'n baie kort lyf. Om hom bokant jou boude te hou, het soms dit wat hang in jou kieste laat beland. En dit wat vroegoggend regop wou staan geknel tot 'n pynlike ervaring. Daarna het die Army 'n skaflike netjiese grys konserwatiewe onderbroek begin uitreik. Die spesifikasies het aan al die vereistes voldoen.

Die eenvoudige Army onderbroek het deur 'n lang moeilike evolusieproses ontwikkel.



Foto Krediet: [talesfromthesupplydepot.blog](http://talesfromthesupplydepot.blog)



## ***Die Army Sandale***

Dan was daar die plakkie. Dit het gelyk soos 'n moderne weergawe van die wat deur die Romeinse Legioene gedra was. Hier het Kwartiermeester Generaal se sin vir humor na vore gekom. Die kruisbande oor die voetbrug was nie verstelbaar nie. Vir die soldaat met 'n breë voet of hoë voetbrug moes die tekkies maar inloop todat dit gepas het. Vir die soldaat met smal voete en 'n lae voetbrug moes maar leer om so half op-so half langs sy sandale te loop. Die Army sandaal was nie hoog op die estetiese skaal nie. Maar dan, die Army voorsien nie vir mooiheid nie maar vir praktiese waarde.

Dit is hierdie praktiese waarde wat swak omskryf was toe die sandal ontwerp was. Die bo-sool was effens gepad met 'n plastiese (?) oortreksel. Hoe bedagsaam van Kwartiermeester Generaal. – BEHALWE dat sweet geensins geabsorbeer was nie. Na so 30 minute na die soldaat dit aangetrek het – veral as dit die dag baie warm was – dan het hy maar so gly-gly voortbeweeg. Die soldaat kon dit ook nie onder die stort dra nie (om voetskimmel te voorkom). Die mengsel van leerkruisbande bo en plastiek binnesool het nie saamgewerk tydens die droogword slag nie. En gepolitoer moes dit wees vir inspeksie.

Die Army moes 'n miljoen of meer daarvan bestel het, want dit was uitgereik tot aan die einde van die Bosoorlog. Die aanbod het die aanvraag total oorskry.



## ***Die Army Tekkie***

Hiermee het Kwartiermeester Generaal weer vrye teuels gegee aan sy sadistiese neigings.

Die ontwerp was geskoei op die tennistekkie, net in nutria. Dit is egter waar die ooreenkoms opgehou het. Stel jou voor 'n tekkie wat geen skokke met sy sool geabsorbeer het nie. Dit was 'n waarborg vir stresfaktore. Moontlik was dit 'n ooreenkoms tussen Kwartiermeester Generaal en Geneesheer Generaal. Iets van die een hand was die ander, of is dit nou die een voet was die ander.

Maar een eienskap het alle ander oortref. Die soldaat kon daardie sool nie opgedra kry in twee jaar nie. Die seil bokant kon tekens van verweer toon, maar daardie swaar sool het dan nog splinternuut vertoon.

Gedurende 'n opwelling van deernis het Kwartiermeester Generaal gedurende die tagtigs die Adidas tipe tekkie begin uitreik. Adidas moes seker 'n groot oorskot gehad het, of moes 'n ou reeks uitfaseer, want hierdie tekkies was nooit in nutria nie.



# Die Gevoel van Skoon Klere

**Tertius Zitzke**

Stort - Gewoonlik het al die basisse min water gehad. So jy klim in sinkhok, 20 manne, 10 storkopppe, maak nat, seep, skrop, skrop... en spoel af. Heerlik. Met jou Hang10 plakkies en PT broek terug tent toe, trek van jou skoon browns, en boots aan. Lekker vars. MUM of Shield... hare gekam. Tande geborsel... Binne 'n uur by die menasietent.

Daai patrollieklere lê daar op die tentvloer... hulle staan so half regop... Die hemp het donker merke van die sweet en stof waar die webbing se bande sit. Res met salpeter merke. Die brown broek redelik sif... veral op die bobene, dis waar jy daai taai vingers afvee, op jou mes... en daar sit nog paar games Nots&Crosses daarop... van die laaste smokebreak op patrollie.

Kouse het hulle eie lewe- soetsuur&frank!!! Alles in een, en dan gee jy hom nog so 'n ruik net om seker te maak... hy leef nog... Alles in 'n brandemmer, met 3 stewige

hande Tannie Esme se Punch... Daar was nooit 'n voorkeur vir waspoeier nie, jy koop wat in die kantien was... dalk was daar 'n paar manne wat meer van Sunlight as Surf gehou het??

Jy trap daai emmer, hou aan jou makker vas anders val jy om, net met jou nylon-53BN PT broekie aan in die son. Grap, gesels oor briewe pakkie, wat mense in States doen.

Daai water is bruin, spoel paar keer uit, vars wasgoed. Ons ma's het ons so grootgemaak. Ordentlik met 'n trots: "mens lyk nie so nie" Hang wasgoed aan tent kables op.

Ons het min van daai meganiese tuimel-houers gehad op die grens. Daar het buitendien altyd 'n sifgat sy klere by jou om ingooi, so eerder die emmers gebruik.

So het ons gerol, en dit geniet, met disipline en trots.

